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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1402nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 20 July 1992, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea)

- Statement by the Chairman
- Participation of non-members in the work of the Special Committee
- Report of the Regional Seminar to Review the Special Development Needs of Island Territories, held within the context of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, at St. George's Grenada (17-19 June 1992)

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- Reports of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance

  Question of Pitcairn

  Question of St. Helena

  Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Tokelau, Turks and Caicos Islands, United States Virgin Islands

  Question of dissemination of information on decolonization

  Examination of petitions

- Requests for hearing

- Organization of work

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: I have the honour of welcoming members to this resumed session of the Special Committee. The months that have elapsed since we opened our 1992 session in February have been exceptionally active. The new consolidated Subcommittee, under the dynamic chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. Amor Ardhaoui, Deputy Permanent Representative of Tunisia, met regularly and was able to complete its work on time. The Committee for its part met several times to discuss the organization of its work. The open-ended Working Group which was established by the Committee held no less than nine meetings to consider how best to revitalize the Committee and improve the efficiency of its work.

Just a few weeks ago, the first of the regional seminars provided for under the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism was held in Grenada, in the Caribbean.

Most of these activities are further steps in the review process that began three years ago. Members will no doubt recall that, since the accession of Namibia to independence, in 1990, there have been repeated suggestions that the Committee should review its approach and method of work to improve its efficiency in order better to serve the interests of the peoples of the remaining 18 Non-Self-Governing Territories and assist them in the fulfilment of their aspirations.

In a world of rapid change, it would have been unwise to turn a deaf ear to those suggestions. That is why the Committee, in its wisdom, decided almost two years ago to embark upon a series of reforms which should enable it to meet the challenges ahead.

(The Chairman)

That review was all the more timely as the General Assembly, in its resolution 43/47, on the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, had set a target date - the year 2000 - for the complete eradication of colonialism. The Committee also had before it the reports of the two regional seminars it had organized in Vanuatu and Barbados, the main objectives of which were to ascertain the views and aspirations of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in the Pacific and the Caribbean respectively. As members will recall, the Committee has consistently reaffirmed that the views of the peoples concerned should be paramount in charting a new course of action for the Committee.

Last but not least, the General Assembly during its forty-sixth session adopted resolution 46/181 approving a Plan of Action for the Decade, which includes a series of activities to be carried out by the Committee.

It was against that background that the Committee initiated a number of actions to create the conditions conducive to complete decolonization by the year 2000. Among those initiatives was the establishment in 1991 of an open-ended Working G oup to advise on what should be done to create those conditions. That Worki g Group, which I had the honour to chair, worked relentlessly and made important recommendations which were almost immediately implemented by the Committee.

For instance, the merger of the two Subcommittees and the consolidation of the resolutions on 10 small Territories were among the suggestions of the Working Group. However, in a world of rapid change, that review of the Committee's work had to be a continuing process. This is why the Committee unanimously decided again this year to establish an open-ended Working Group

(The Chairman)

and to entrust it with the mandate of making proposals for further improvements in our work, taking into account the suggestions - and criticisms - voiced by a number of delegations during the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The recommendations of that Working Group, which the Committee endorsed on 1 June 1992, are sufficiently flexible to allow for adjustments as may be required. Indeed, members are aware that, in accordance with past practice, consultations on adjustments to be made to some of our traditional resolutions and decisions are under way with the participation of the Bureau.

The regional organizations concerned, which have always been our full partners in the decolonization process - the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the South Pacific Forum and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) - are being consulted. So are the administering Powers, whose cooperation should be strengthened or restored.

Last but not least, the regional seminar held in Grenada in June this year, the report of which is the first item on the programme of work of this resumed session, has given us another opportunity to improve our knowledge of the views and aspirations of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean. Needless to say, those views and aspirations will have to be taken into account in making our final recommendations to the General Assembly.

Creating the necessary conditions for complete decolonization by the year 2000 will require that continuing efforts be made to harmonize the views, however divergent they may be, of all the partners in the decolonization process, the ultimate goal being the interests of the peoples of the Territories concerned. The outcome of our work at this resumed session, and

(The Chairman)

our recommendations, should above all reflect those concerns if we are really to assist the peoples of those Territories.

The views expressed by the representatives of the Caribbean Territories at the Grenada seminar clearly show, on the part of the leaders of those Territories, a renewed confidence in the United Nations and in the Special Committee's ability to concentrate its efforts on their specific problems and to help them achieve their objectives.

In this connection, I should like to draw attention in particular to the summary of their views contained in the seminar's report. I consider that new development to be a result of the efforts of the Committee over the past three years to pay more attention to the specific problems of the small Territories. We must persevere in our efforts if we want that trend to continue. The objectives of the Plan of Action cannot be achieved without the full participation and confident cooperation of the peoples of the remaining Territories, and, of course, of the partners in this process, the members of the General Assembly, the administering Powers, the specialized agencies of the United Nations and the regional organizations in the Pacific and the Caribbean and in Africa.

As this resumed session of the Committee is about to begin its work, I felt that it might be helpful to share these views with members at the outset.

PARTICIPATION OF NON-MEMBERS IN THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to inform members that the delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has requested to participate in the Committee's deliberations during the coming two weeks. May I take it that the Committee agrees to that request?

It was so decided.

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL SEMINAR TO REVIEW THE SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF ISLAND TERRITORIES, HELD WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM, AT ST. GEORGE'S GRENADA (17-19 JUNE 1992) (A/AC.109/1114)

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Trinidad and Tobago, Rapporteur of the Seminar, to introduce the report.

Mrs. KING-ROUSSEAU (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to introduce the report (A/AC.109/1114) of the Regional Seminar to Review the Special Development Needs of Island Territories, held within the context of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, which was adopted by the participants on 19 June 1992 at the end of the three-day meeting in Grenada.

Information on the legislative mandate for the convening of the Seminar, its objectives and the themes which formed the basis of discussions is provided in the Introduction of the report.

The Special Committee was represented at the Grenada Seminar by His Excellency Ambassador Renagi Renagi Lohia of Papua New Guinea, who chaired the proceedings, as well as by representatives from Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Fiji, Mali and Tunisia, and by my own delegation.

The important opening statement by the Chairman is summarized in paragraphs 14 to 19 in section II of the report.

Participants were also honoured to hear an address at the opening session by Senator the Honourable Tillman Thomas, Minister in the Ministry of Finance of Grenada, the text of which is annexed to the report. The Honourable Denis Noel, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs of Grenada, also addressed the closing session.

(Mrs. King-Rousseau, Trinidad and Tobago)

The full list of participants and observers is in annex II of the report.

In keeping with the Special Committee's position, as represented in the approved guidelines and rules of procedure for the Seminar, that the views of the peoples of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories should be given pre-eminence, the important statements by participants from the Territories are summarized in section II of the report.

Regarding participation by the Non-Self-Governing Territories, it should be noted that two Government Ministers, three other members of legislative councils, two territorial Government officials and three representatives of non-governmental organizations from six of the seven Caribbean Territories attended the Seminar. They addressed a number of issues of relevance to the Special Committee and its work, including the questions of self-government, self-determination, independence and the need for political education programmes. Participants from the Territories also spoke of the importance to the dependencies of education and human resources development as well as the impact of immigration and emigration on the process of self-determination and the role of the expatriate workforce in the Territories.

With respect to the role of the administering Powers and the United Nations in the decolonization process, some representatives from the Territories referred specifically to the importance of participation by one of the administering Powers in the Special Committee's work and the obligations of that Power under the Charter of the United Nations to ensure the social and economic development of the Territories. Others also called for the removal of structural impediments to full participation of Non-Self-Governing Territories in the General Assembly and the technical work of the United

(Mrs. King-Rousseau, Trinidad and Tobago)

Nations and other international bodies, and spoke of the importance of providing adequate financing to facilitate such participation and of the need for the Territories to be informed of the economic, social and other development assistance available from the United Nations and its agencies.

It is also useful to point out that one elected representative proposed that the next seminar discuss issues submitted by the Territories themselves and be hosted by one of the dependencies.

Section III of the report contains the summary of discussions and recommendations of the Seminar. It covers a broad spectrum of issues, including the provision of educational and technical skills and development assistance, the problem of illicit drug trafficking, the impact of the tourist industry on the culture of the dependencies and on the availability of land for their peoples, protection of the environment and sustainable development, access of the Territories to programmes and activities of the United Nations and participation of their representatives, in an official observer capacity, in the work of the United Nations, including this Special Committee, its Subcommittee, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. In recognition of the difficulties experienced by the Territories in funding their participation in meetings of interest to them, participants suggested that the provision of financial assistance for such participation be considered.

I also wish to highlight the recommendation that the Special Committee intensify its dissemination of information on decolonization directly to the Territories and that they in turn provide up-to-date information on a regular basis on the situation in the dependencies and on the peoples' concerns.

(Mrs. King-Rousseau, Trinidad and Tobago)

Before concluding, I wish to draw the Committee's attention to three errors in the report. In the fifth line of paragraph 19 on page 6 the word "the" appearing between the words "that" and "it" should be deleted. In the sixth line of paragraph 31 on page 20 the word "method" should read "methods". In the penultimate line on page 21 the word "least" should be changed to "less" and should be capitalized, as should the words "developed countries". The line will then read :

"country, Grenada, which was the first among the Less Developed Countries of".

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By way of explanation, within the Caribbean community there are two groupings of States: there are the more developed countries and the less developed countries, and to state "least developed countries" in the text would be misleading, because in the context of the United Nations it means something totally different.

In conclusion, I wish to commend the report for the serious consideration of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments on the report or on its summary of discussions and recommendations in section III? As this does not appear to be the case, may I suggest that, in approving the report, members take note of the discussions and recommendations and that some of the recommendations which have been highlighted by the Rapporteur, for example, funding for members of Governments of Territories for their direct participation in the work of the Special Committee in order to facilitate the examination of some of the issues, may be considered during the session.

If there are no objections, I shall consider that the Special Committee approves the report in general, and that during our deliberations more specific issues can be raised for further consideration.

It was so decided.

REPORTS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SMALL TERRITORIES, PETITIONS, INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

QUESTION OF PITCAIRN (A/AC.109/L.1777)

QUESTION OF ST. HELENA (A/AC.109/L.1778)

QUESTIONS OF AMERICAN SAMOA, ANGUILLA, BERMUDA, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS, CAYMAN ISLANDS, GUAM, MONTSERRAT, TOKELAU, TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS, UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS (A/AC.109/L.1779)

QUESTION OF DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON DECOLONIZATION (A/AC.109/L.1780)

EXAMINATION OF PETITIONS (A/AC.109/L.1782)

The CHAIRMAN: I call on Mr. Hossein Lotfi Hormozabadi, Rapporteur of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance, to present the reports of the Subcommittee.

Mr. LOFTI HORMOZABADI (Islamic Republic of Iran), Rapporteur of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance: On behalf of the Subcommittee, I have the honour to introduce its reports to the Special Committee.

As members are aware, the two subcommittees of the Special Committee were combined at the beginning of the year as a result of the decision taken by the Special Committee last year on the recommendation of the Working Group established by the Special Committee. This consolidation resulted in savings in several areas in terms of fewer meetings as well as in fewer pages of documentation. The reports of the Subcommittee are as follows: Pitcairn (A/AC.109/L.1777); St. Helena (A/AC.109/L.1778; consolidated Territories - American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Tokelau, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands (A/AC.109/L.1779); dissemination of information (A/AC.109/L.1780); and examination of petititions (A/AC.109/L.1782).

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Once again, the Subcommittee, in pursuance of the innovative approach started last year, has been able to present three reports on small Territories instead of four last year and 13 in previous years.

Document A/AC.109/L.1779 covers 10 Territories: American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Tokelau, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands. It contains two chapters: chapter I, consideration by the Subcommittee of these territories; and chapter II, adoption of the draft consolidated resolution, in keeping with the Working Group's recommendation. The consolidated resolution I have the honour to introduce deals, in part A, with all the characteristics and conditions that apply to the 10 Caribbean and Pacific Territories and, in part B, with specific conditions prevailing in each of the Territories.

Concise and complete conclusions and recommendations were arrived at following a detailed examination of the Territories, taking into account conditions in the Territories, as well as statements from representatives of the Territories, who provided us with valuable information and insights into the problems and aspirations faced by those Territories. I hope that the Committee will continue to support our work.

The Subcommittee also adopted two separate reports on Pitcairn, document A/AC.109/L.1777, and on St. Helena, document A/AC.109/L.1778.

As can be seen in the reports members have before them, the Subcommittee places particular importance on the interests and the well-being of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and has urged them to

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participate in our work to make it clear that it is exclusively their province freely to decide their future status.

The draft resolutions reiterated the request for the dispatch of visiting missions. This continues to be a genuine concern of the Subcommittee's members and of representatives of the Territories. The Subcommittee has indeed achieved an extremely strong consensus on the importance of visiting missions as a means of observing and closely evaluating the aspirations of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

On matters pertaining to petitions, information and assistance, the Subcommittee held consultations with representatives of the Department of Public Information and the Department for Special Political Affairs with regard to the dissemination of information on decolonization.

Before concluding, I should like to thank all our colleagues who are members of the Subcommittee, the Secretariat, especially the interpreters for their patience, and all those persons whose efforts and cooperation have assisted the Subcommittee to conclude its work.

On behalf of the Subcommittee, I trust that the draft reports introduced today will meet with the satisfaction of the Special Committee and that they will be adopted accordingly.

The CHAIRMAN: With respect to the reports relating to the 12 Territories, namely, Pitcairn and St. Helena, and American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Tokelau, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands, contained in documents A/AC.109/L.1777, L.1778 and L.1779, the Committee will take action thereon after the hearing of the petitioners at a future meeting.

(The Chairman)

I call on the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. KEMBER (New Zealand): On page 15 of the report (A/AC.109/L.1779), in the sub-section on Guam, I think the reference at the beginning should be to the Special Committee, not to the General Assembly, if my understanding is correct.

The CHAIRMAN: May I request that the Secretariat take appropriate action.

The Committee will next take up the report relating to dissemination of information on decolonization, contained in document A/AC.109/L.1780.

If there are no comments, may I take it that the Committee adopts the report and endorses the conclusions and recommendations contained therein?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will now take up the report relating to the examination of petitions, contained in document A/AC.109/L.1782. May I take it that the Committee takes note of the report?

It was so decided.

REQUESTS FOR HEARING

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to draw members' attention to requests for hearing which have been circulated in aides-mémoire 8/92 and 9/92, relating to Guam and the United States Virgin Islands. As some of the petitioners concerned will need to be informed of the Committee's decision as soon as possible, I suggest that the Committee act on the requests expeditiously.

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Committee agrees to accede to the request contained in aide-mémoire 8/92, relating to Guam.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Committee agrees to accede to the request contained in aide-mémoire 9/92, relating to the United States Virgin Islands.

It was so decided.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: Before adjourning, so as to facilitate our work, and as indicated in aide-mémoire 7/92 of 22 June 1992 concerning the provisional schedule of meetings, I would remind those members wishing to take part in the debates relating to foreign economic and other interests, military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories, and implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies that they should contact the Secretariat upon the adjournment of this meeting.

In order to facilitate the work of the Committee and to enable the Rapporteur to prepare and submit the Committee's report to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly by 7 August 1992, the Committee will be expected to conclude consideration of all items on its agenda by 31 July 1992. Within that framework, we will, of course, adjust the programme as need be, taking into account the availability of the necessary documentation. So that we may make the best use of the servicing resources allocated to the Committee for this session, I appeal to members to make every effort to be at our meetings on time and to be prepared to speak on the day of their inscription.

The programme for the two weeks is relatively heavy and includes the hearing of petitioners on a number of Territories. The Committee will also

(The Chairman)

have to take action on a number of draft decisions during the same period. I would therefore appeal to all members to be prepared so that we can make maximum use of the time and resources available to the Committee.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.